

Message Text

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APPROVED BY P MR. SISCO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 028590

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, NATO, MARR, PFOR, IC, UK

SUBJECT: UK/ICELAND FISHERIES DISPUTE: MEETING WITH
RAMSBOTHAM

REF: A) LONDON 1805
B) STATE 23710

1. AMBASSADOR RAMSBOTHAM SAW UNDER SECRETARY SISCO ON
FEBRUARY 4 TO FOLLOW UP THE CALLAGHAN SESSION WITH NATO
AMBASSADORS, ETC. THAT SAME DAY (REFTEL A). RAMSBOTHAM
REFERRED TO HIS EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH THE UNDER
SECRETARY (REFTEL B) AND NOTED THAT CALLAGHAN HAD ASKED HIM
TO ELABORATE TO SISCO CURRENT BRITISH THINKING ABOUT THE
DISPUTE. HE NOTED THAT PRIME MINISTER WILSON HAD SPENT
SEVENTEEN HOURS OF HIS TIME TRYING TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION
WITH HALLGRIMSSON BUT THAT HE WAS ULTIMATELY FACED WITH AN
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ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS INCAPABLE OF CONTROLLING ITS

OWN DOMESTIC SITUATION AND THEREFORE UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE AUTHORITATIVELY. HE NOTED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS STILL AWAITING CLARIFICATION OF WHAT THE GOI MEANT BY A SHORT TERM AGREEMENT -- WHICH WAS TYPICAL OF THEIR ONGOING DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING ANY KIND OF PROPOSALS OR COUNTER-

PROPOSALS FROM THE GOI. AMBASSADOR RAMSBOTHAM STATED THAT HMG WAS ALSO AWARE OF THE NATO DIMENSION AND WAS AS CONCERNED ABOUT IT AS IT COULD BE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD COOPERATED FULLY WITH LUNS' EARLIER EFFORTS, WAS MAKING EVERY ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE NATO ALLIES INFORMED THIS DAY AND HAD INSTRUCTED RAMSBOTHAM TO SEE LUNS ON THIS MATTER DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON.

2. AMBASSADOR RAMSBOTHAM STRESSED THAT THE BRITISH UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM IN ITS FISHING PORTS WAS A VERY REAL ONE: THE RATE WAS DOUBLE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. HE ADDED THAT PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE TO BE PUSHED AROUND BY A SMALL POWER. HE STATED THAT, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, ANY HELP AND UNDERSTANDING BY FRIENDS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

3. THE UNDER SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE USG WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ISSUE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE US HAD NOT BEEN AND HAD NO INTENTION IN THE FUTURE OF GETTING INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE DISPUTE. HE NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THAT HMG WAS GIVING POSITIVE CONSIDERATION TO DISCUSSIONS LEADING TOWARDS AN INTERIM AGREEMENT; HE TOOK THIS AS AN ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HMG'S CONCILIATORY POLICY. SISCO AGREED WITH RAMSBOTHAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ICELAND AND THE DISTURBING EFFECT THIS HAD ON THAT COUNTRY'S ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE. HE NOTED THAT THE BRITISH KNEW PERHAPS BETTER THAN THE USG THE REPERCUSSIONS THIS DISPUTE COULD HAVE. HE INDICATED THAT THE USG HAD DONE WHAT IT COULD, WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE MIDDLE, TO NUDGE THE GOI IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. HE CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING THE HOPE AGAIN THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD WORK TOGETHER TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM. KISSINGER

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